

## Testimony on HB 105

### Creating Emergency Department and Hospital Discharge Data Reporting Act

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Chairwoman Becker and members of the Human Services Committee:

The Montana Primary Care Association would like to express our support in favor of HB 105. There has been a great void in the Department of Public Health and Human Services' ability to effectively assess and monitor the health status of Montanans because of the lack of current and quality morbidity data. This bill would help the Department and MHA establish a hospital discharge data system that would greatly enhance the State's ability to carry out its surveillance activities as well as help communities and other organizations obtain quality data to assist in need assessments, grant applications and health plans focused on priority health needs that will ultimately improve health outcomes of the community.

The availability of morbidity data is of critical important to the Montana Primary Care Association. Our member organizations, community health centers and communities interested in applying for federal grants rely on data to justify the need in their communities for federal assistance programs, design their health care plans around specific health issues of their target populations, and monitor progress in improving health outcomes in their communities. In order to be eligible for HRSA 330 Community Health Center grants, communities must demonstrate high need in their community by scoring above 70 points on a Need for Assistance Worksheet. These score sheets may require standardized data sources, and hospital data is often the required data source so states without access to hospital data are at a real disadvantage.

Hospital and ER data would provide realistic baseline data on health indicator measures so that progress could be monitored. Such data elements as hospital admission rates for patients with diabetes, asthma, and cardiovascular disease, and their complication rates would more accurately identify the most important health concerns in these communities and enhance their competitiveness in obtaining grant assistance, but more importantly make them better equipped to meet the unique health care needs of their populations.

MPCA hope you will carefully consider the passage of HB 105.